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REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to the Final Office Action mailed June 4, 2003. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speakman in view of Tohzuka. Claims 5 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speakman in view of Tohzuka and further in view of Lee. The rejection of Claims 3 and 10 was withdrawn.

Pursuant to a telephone conference between the Examiner and the undersigned on August 14, 2003, Applicants have amended Independent Claims 1 and 7 to more clearly distinguish the presently claimed invention over the cited references. In addition to the distinctions between the claimed invention and the cited references that were set forth in the prior amendment, none of the cited references, taken either individually or in combination, teach or suggest a bearing surface having a rigid PTFE coating or a rigid coating of self-lubrication greaseless material as recited by independent Claims 1 and 7, respectively. Applicants have also amended dependent Claim 11 to correct a typographical error from a prior amendment. Applicants submit that no new matter is presented in the amendments. Pursuant to the Examiner's preliminary agreement to the amendments as presented, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for immediate allowance, and such action is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned to resolve any remaining issues.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.